

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEW GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK 2020

**For the integrity of the most extensive and
best protected tropical forest**

Ecosystem fragmentation caused by human activity threatens biodiversity and diminishes possibilities for climate change adaptation, as diverse reports and research studies have established¹. This problem is evident due to the fact that only 20% of the tropical forests on the planet cover areas larger than 500 square kilometers². Thanks to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), it has been confirmed that fragmentation is a consequence of the strong changes of the use of the soil and oceans over the past 50 years³. Additionally, this change is the main direct driver of biodiversity loss.

According to the IPBES Global Evaluation Report, 75% of the terrestrial cover has suffered considerable alterations due to human factors. **“Great part of the ecosystem and biological diversity indicators have shown a rapid deterioration”**, therefore 25% of the animal and plant species are currently threatened⁴. For Latin America, the Living Planet Report of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) establishes that between 1970 and 2016, there was a reduction of 94% of the monitored populations of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians in the region⁵. This alarming percentage implies that the model of isolated conservation units does not offer guarantees for the protection of ecosystem, species or genetic diversity.

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1. Hilty, J., Worboys, G.L., Keeley, A., Woodley, S., Lausche, B.J., Locke, H., Carr, M., Pulsford, I., Pittock, J., White, J.W., Theobald, D. M., Levine, J., Reuling, M., Watson, J. E.M., Ament, R., Groves, C. & Tabor, G.M. (2021). Guidelines for connectivity conservation through networks and ecological corridors. Good Practice Guidelines for Protected Areas. No.30. Gland, Switzerland: UICN. <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2020.PAG.30.es>
2. Brondizio, E. S., Settele, J., Díaz, S. & Ngo, H.T. (editores)(2019). Report for the Global Evaluation on Biological Diversity and Ecosystem Services. Bonn, Germany: Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, section 2.1.13.2.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. WWF (2020). Living Planet Report 2020 - Bending the curve of biodiversity loss. Almond, R.E.A., Grooten M. y Petersen, T. (Eds). Gland, Suiza: WWF.

In this context, ecosystem and sociocultural connectivity⁶ (ESCC) is fundamental in order to reduce biodiversity loss and ecosystem fragmentation⁷. Connectivity is also determinant in order to guarantee the contributions of biodiversity to the regulation of the water and carbon cycles, which have an effect in the global climate change regulation. For this reason, the members of the North Amazon Alliance (NAA) acclaim the need to rethink global conservation strategies based on Ecosystem and Sociocultural Connectivity.

NAA is an initiative of Civil Society Organizations from six of the countries of the Amazon Basin, committed to safeguard ecosystem and sociocultural connectivity in the Andes-Amazon-Atlantic corridor in the region north of the Amazon River, the most extensive and best preserved tropical forest in the world⁸. We promote the scaling-up of solutions and strategies built bottom-up by the members of the Alliance, hand in hand with indigenous peoples, local communities, other civil society organizations and governmental bodies. This approach has proven to be effective for the protection of this corridor: 267 million hectares north of the Amazon River which cover an area four times larger than France, from which 50% of this territory is under some type of conservation or sustainable development figure⁹.

We are aware that maintaining connectivity amongst ecosystems and increasing connectivity between territorial figures that aim for their protection is one of the largest challenges for biodiversity conservation. For this reason, this topic has been key in the work lead since 2018 by the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) regarding the new *Global Biodiversity Framework Post 2020 (GBF)*¹⁰. Taking the relevance of the construction and negotiation process of the GBF into account for the work of the NAA, and with the aim of consolidating ecosystem and sociocultural connectivity in the North Amazon region, we offer the following considerations and recommendations regarding the second version of the GBF target draft.

North Amazon Alliance (NAA) is an initiative committed to safeguard ecosystem and sociocultural connectivity in the Andes-Amazon-Atlantic corridor: 267 million hectares, which covers an area four times larger than France.

6. The North Amazon Alliance defines the ecosystem and sociocultural connectivity as the structural and functional connection between natural areas of importance for the maintenance of the integrity of ecosystems, local communities, ecosystem services and regional economies. This approach recognizes the importance of taking into account the ecological, social and cultural dimensions in order to guarantee the connectivity between ecosystems and landscapes.
7. Hilty Op. Cit., p. 7; Trombulak, S. & Baldwin, R. (2010). Landscape-scale Conservation Planning. Londres, Inglaterra: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9575-6>; Resasco, J., (2019). 'Meta-analysis on a decade of testing corridor efficacy: What new have we learned?' Current Landscape Ecology Reports 4:61-69. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40823-019-00041-9>
8. For more information about the North Amazon Alliance and the Andes-Amazon-Atlantic Corridor please visit: <http://alianzanoramazonica.org>
9. Amazonian Georeferenced Socio-Environmental Information Network (2020). Amazonia Under Pressure Atlas 2020. In: <https://www.amazoniasocioambiental.org/es/publicacion/amazonia-bajo-presion-2020/>
10. In fact, the GBF Draft currently being discussed establishes the increase of connectivity, integrity and natural ecosystem cover as one of its goals for 2050. Also, one of the targets for 2030 is that at least 30% of the planet is protected and conserved by 2030 through a "well connected and effective protected area system with other effective conservation measures based on areas".

Intact Areas and Climate Change (Targets 1 and 7)

The standing forest in the northern region of the Amazon releases near 20 billion metric tons of water into the atmosphere in a day, what makes it one of the most important sources of freshwater in the world¹¹. Additionally, the water released creates a “flying river” that carries more water than the Amazon River which is key for global climate regulation. Fortunately, the North Amazon subregion presents relatively low deforestation and gas emission rates, and extensive *intact*¹² or nearly intact areas¹³. These areas are the most valuable resource for the maintenance of life, climate regulation and human wellbeing.

We consider it important that multilateral instruments like the GBF contemplate ambitious conservation targets, in order to guarantee the integrity of strategic areas which have not yet been highly affected by biodiversity loss or climate change. For this reason, we are concerned about the current draft of the GBF (August 2020) shows a decrease of the conservation commitments for intact areas, which according to recent research, barely reaches the 2.8% of the global surface¹⁴, in contrast to the earlier version (February 2020).

While in the Zero Draft from February 2020, Target 1 established that for 2030 existent intact areas should be retained, the second version reduces this target to “almost all existent intact areas”. This way, the current GBF draft implies that during the next decade intact areas will continue to be lost. This is not only contradictory to the urgency of a new set of global biodiversity targets, but it also questions the congruency between the already identified need for Ecosystem and Sociocultural Connectivity

Protecting the integrity of the total of intact areas -which barely reaches 2.8% of the global surface- is key in order to reduce biodiversity threats.

11. Pearce, F. (2018, julio 24). Rivers in the Sky: How Deforestation Is Affecting Global Water Cycles. Recovered from <https://e360.yale.edu/features/how-deforestation-affecting-global-water-cycles-climate-change>; Kedmey, D. (2015, noviembre 24). The largest river on Earth is invisible - and airborne. Recovered from <https://ideas.ted.com/this-airborne-river-may-be-the-largest-river-on-earth/>
12. The definition of the intact areas has been revisited due to the demonstrated long-time interaction between nature and people. Plumptre et al. (2021) highlight that only 2,8% of the global surface meet the requirements to be classified as intact ecosystems (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/ffgc.2021.626635/full>). The concept of “intact” strengthens the idea that human beings are not part of nature. Most knowledge systems of the Latin American indigenous peoples conceive humans as part of the living system that sustains them.
13. Amazonian Georeferenced Socio-Environmental Information Network, Op. Cit.; Walker, W. S., Gorelik, S. R., Baccini, A., Aragon-Osejo, J. L., Josse, C., Meyer, C., Macedo, M. N., Augusto, C., Rios, S., Katan, T., de Souza, A. A., Cuellar, S., Llanos, A., Zager, I., Mirabal, G. D., Solvik, K. K., Farina, M. K., Moutinho, P. y Schwartzman, S. (2020). The role of forest conversion, degradation, and disturbance in the carbon dynamics of Amazon indigenous territories and protected areas. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 117(6), 3015 LP – 3025. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1913321117>
14. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/ffgc.2021.626635/full>

and the conditions the GBF hopes to offer in order to make its vision achievable for 2050. Protecting the integrity of the total of intact areas is key in order to correctly apply the Theory of Change of the new GBF, for without this, it would be impossible to reduce biodiversity threats and satisfy people's needs.

In the case of the Amazon forest, not protecting the total of the intact areas and primary forests would unfold the degradation of ecosystem connectivity, the loss of ecological integrity and a decrease of biodiversity, the erosion of a global freshwater source, an affection to the global water cycles, and the gradual release of a portion of the 90 to 140 billion metric tons of carbon that its vegetation retains¹⁵; as well as the loss of the mayor concentration of edaphic carbon found in the Amazon¹⁶.

All this would have severe consequences in climate regulation, causing additional obstacles to achieve target 7 of the new GBF, related to the increase of the contributions of climate change mitigation and adaptation¹⁷. Additionally, because of the intrinsic relation between indigenous peoples and their territories, not protecting all intact areas would be in detriment of their livelihood, their survival and and their cultural and spiritual systems, from which their wellbeing unfolds. Regarding the importance of maintaining the integrity of the Amazon, the NAA suggests that the GBF and its action plan recognize the Amazon as a priority bioregion in order to meet its goals.

In this context, the promotion and maintenance of the ESCC through the protection of all intact areas, and its forests and wetlands, is a valuable strategy with positive effects for conservation, as well as for mitigation and adaptation to climate change. For this reason, we recommend that the 1st Zero Draft's drafting is maintained regarding Target 1 of the new GBF, in order for all, and not the majority of existent intact areas to be retained.

The Amazon region is a great example of the fundamental role of indigenous peoples, their territories and their knowledge and management systems for large-scale conservation.

15. WWF (2020). Inside the Amazon. Recovered from https://wwf.panda.org/discover/knowledge_hub/where_we_work/amazon/about_the_amazon/
16. Draper, F. C., Roucoux, K. H., Lawson, I. T., Mitchard, E. T. A., Honorio Coronado, E. N., Lähteenoja, O., Torres Montenegro, L., Valderrama Sandoval, E., Zarate, R., & Baker, T. R. (2014). The distribution and amount of carbon in the largest peatland complex in Amazonia. *Environmental Research Letters*, 9(12), 124017. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/9/12/124017>
17. During the 2003-2016 time frame, the Amazon region was a net source of carbon to the atmosphere, releasing about 1,290 million tons of carbon (MtC). Accounting for both losses and gains, 47% of the region's carbon loss was attributed to ecosystem degradation and disturbance and 53% to deforestation. This data can be consulted at: Walker WS, Gorelik SR, Baccini A, et al. 2020. The role of forest conversion, degradation, and disturbance in the carbon dynamics of Amazon indigenous territories and protected areas. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U.S.A* 117: 3015-25. On the other hand, another element that generates degradation in Amazonian ecosystems, species and human populations, but of a less visible nature, is water pollution associated with legal and illegal mining, which is currently spreading throughout the Amazon region, in general, and the North Amazon region in particular. (Uryu et al. 2001 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2641841>), Guimarães 2020 (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.032>), Vega et al. 2018 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6028914/>) Mosquera et al 2019 (DOI:10.1007/s10393-019-01451-1), Barbosa et al. 2021 (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11356-021-13953-z>).

Importance of Indigenous Territories for the conservation spatial targets

Global conservation efforts have structured around area-based measures, mainly through Natural Protected Areas (NPA) and more recently, through the denominated Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECM). In spite of the importance that NPA have has as the main tool for conservation strategies, and the OECMs amplify this perspective, it is now recognized that these are no longer the only means to achieve this¹⁸.

One of the main achievements of global conservation took place in 2003, in the frame of the World Parks Congress, with the launching of the approach of conservation based on rights¹⁹.

This approach establishes that local communities are a key stakeholder for conservation and in consequence highlights the relevance of their active participation in the constitution and management of ecosystem protection strategies²⁰. From then on, the role of indigenous peoples in biological conservation has been openly acknowledged, and therefore the need of establishing collaborative conservation mechanisms²¹.

The Amazon region is a great example of the fundamental role of indigenous peoples, their territories and their knowledge and management systems for large-scale conservation. Its low deforestation and environmental degradation rates are due, in a great measure, to the fact that 32% of the region has been declared under the Natural Protected Area category, and 35% correspond to legally constituted Indigenous Territories²². The connectivity secured by the great conservation mosaic in the northern region of the Amazon, composed by 222 natural protected areas and 2,003 indigenous territories, as well as the

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18. The traditional conservation model, based on isolated NPAs, has been ineffective in preventing biodiversity loss. For this reason, and in order to guarantee the integrity and connectivity of Andean-Amazonian ecosystems, North Amazon Alliance (NAA) promotes a landscape vision for the development of tools and strategies.
19. Report of the former Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of indigenous peoples, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (A/71/229).
20. Ibid.
21. Report of the former Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, Mr. John Knox (A/HRC/34/49).
22. The total number of hectares in the Amazon under some figures of protection is 47.2% and does not correspond to the total sum of Protected Areas and Indigenous Territories, as there is a 17.7% overlap between them.

institutional agreements amongst these, have proven to be highly effective for the ecological, cultural and social wellbeing in the region²³.

The indigenous territories and their ancestral cultures offer a great opportunity to achieve the vision and goals of the GBF. In this sense, the environmental and territorial management systems exercised by indigenous peoples strengthen the 2050 vision of the framework. Therefore, as members of the NAA, we recommend that effective and adequate participation spaces for the amazonian indigenous peoples are offered in the frame of the negotiation and implementation of the GBF in order to identify the contributions of indigenous territories to the 2030 and 2050 conservation targets.

Additionally, regarding spatial targets in the GBF, it is key for countries to commit to ambitious conservation goals. Particularly, as established in Target 2 of the new GBF, it is expected to have a well connected and effective natural areas system by 2030, including other effective area-based measures. This way, the world would achieve the protection of 30% of the planet's surface, to what has been called the 30x30 goal.

For the NAA, the adoption of an ambitious spatial target implies a great opportunity to value and recognize the importance of indigenous territories in the protection of biodiversity. We consider that any rise in the percentage of area proposed for this target requires expanding the spectrum of strategies that contribute to biodiversity protection. For this reason, the NNA supports the global 30x30 goal²⁴ established in the GBF target draft currently being negotiated, as a framework that enables the world to value the importance of indigenous territories and its key contribution to the achievement of this target²⁵.

The NAA also makes a call in order for this target to be met taking the Amazonian particularities into account, and therefore, promotes the territorial rights for indigenous peoples, which encompasses the consolidation of territorial collective rights in the Amazonian countries.

The 30x30 goal should take the particularities of the Amazonian region into account and promote the territorial rights for indigenous peoples.

23. Review the map on: <http://alianzanoramazonica.org/#where>
24. NAA supports this global goal, specifying that for large forest biomes, such as the Amazon, 30% may not be significant and rather counterproductive because it could be considered that this goal is practically achieved and therefore, it is not necessary to actively include Indigenous Peoples and their territories in conservation strategies. In this sense, we call attention to the possibility of formulating regional goals.
25. Target 2: By 2030, at least 30% of the planet is protected and conserved through a well-connected and effective system of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, with special emphasis on areas of

We are confident that these considerations and recommendations shall be useful for the discussions that will take place during 2021 in the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) sessions, the Open Ended Working Group 3 and the COP15 of the convention regarding the Convention of Biodiversity, as well as other multilateral spaces of relevance for the biological diversity and climate change. The NAA Alliance reaffirms its intention of serving as a support platform for the negotiation and implementation of the GBF, and therefore, we offer our ample experience of accompanying local processes hand in hand with indigenous peoples in the Amazon Region.



Gaia Amazonas

